

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE
MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
TRANSPORTATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

March 27, 2014

Maricopa Association of Governments Office
302 North First Avenue, Suite 200, Saguaro Room
Phoenix, Arizona

MEMBERS ATTENDING

Avondale: David Fitzhugh, Chair	Litchfield Park: Woody Scoutten
Phoenix: Rick Naimark, Vice Chair	* Maricopa (City): Paul Jepson
ADOT: Kwi-Sung Kang for Floyd Roehrich	Maricopa County: John Hauskins
Buckeye: Scott Lowe	# Mesa: Jeff Martin for Scott Butler
# Cave Creek: Ian Cordwell	* Paradise Valley: Jim Shano
Chandler: Dan Cook	Peoria: Andrew Granger
* El Mirage: Jorge Gastelum	Queen Creek: Mohamed Youssef
* Fountain Hills: Randy Harrel	Scottsdale: Todd Taylor for Paul Basha
Gila Bend: Ernie Rubi	Surprise: Dick McKinley
Gila River: Tim Oliver	Tempe: Shelly Seyler
# Gilbert: Leah Hubbard	Valley Metro: John Farry
Glendale: Debbie Albert	* Wickenburg: Vince Lorefice
Goodyear: Cato Esquivel	Youngtown: Grant Anderson

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ATTENDING

Street Committee: Dana Owsiany, City of Phoenix	* Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee: Denise Lacey, Maricopa County
* ITS Committee: Catherine Hollow, City of Tempe	* Transportation Safety Committee: Renate Ehm, City of Mesa
* FHWA: Ed Stillings	
* Members neither present nor represented by proxy.	+ - Attended by Videoconference
	# - Attended by Audioconference

OTHERS PRESENT

Eric Anderson, MAG	Art Brooks, Strand
John Bullen, MAG	Todd Cencimino, Burgess & Niple
Micah Henry, MAG	Bill Cowdrey
Roger Herzog, MAG	Mindy Kimball
Julie Offman, MAG	Clemenc Ligocki, MCDOT
Teri Kennedy, MAG	Dan Marum, Wilson & Company
Marc Pearsall, MAG	Mark Melynchenko, Phoenix
Nathan Pryor, MAG	Mike Sabatini, Baker
Brian Rubin, MAG	Kristen Sexton, Avondale
Steve Tate, MAG	Tim Wolfe, Dibble

1. Call to Order

Chairman David Fitzhugh from the City of Avondale called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. Chairman Fitzhugh noted that the quorum requirement for the March 27, 2014 TRC meeting was 13 committee members.

2. Approval of Draft January 30, 2014 Minutes

Mr. Woody Scoutten motioned to approve the minutes. Mr. John Hauskins seconded, and the motion passed by a unanimous voice vote of the Committee.

3. Call to the Audience

Chairman Fitzhugh noted that any member of the public who would like to comment should fill out a blue card for Call to the Audience and a yellow card for consent or action items on the agenda.

Chairman Fitzhugh recognized public comment from Ms. Mindy Kimball, who stated that she was a PhD student at the School of Sustainability at Arizona State University. Ms. Kimball noted that she was finishing her dissertation in the next few weeks, has been studying passenger transportation systems in the MAG region, and has been attending MAG meetings and committee meetings for the last two years trying to gather information about how transportation planning and policy making works. Ms. Kimball stated that she wanted to take the opportunity to formally thank the committee for all the effort and dedication that goes into their work everyday. Ms. Kimball explained that she has observed all the framework studies that have been undertaken and has seen them taking shape into policy and planning for the future.

Ms. Kimball also noted that she was an active duty Lieutenant Colonel in the Army. She stated that the Army is funding her PhD program so that she can go on to West Point at the US Military Academy to teach geography and environmental engineering. Ms. Kimball noted that will be teaching the future leaders of the military and nation and will be taking a piece of MAG with her. Ms. Kimball stated that she wanted to thank the committee for being her research and academic playground for last two years. Ms. Kimball noted that the experience has reminded her of why she chose to serve country and appreciates the committee serving the citizens and making a better transportation system for the valley.

Chair Fitzhough thanked Ms. Kimball for her comments and wished her the best on her future endeavors.

Mr. Hauskins noted that our original freeway system was called the interstate and defense transportation system. Mr. Hauskins stated that it was Dwight Eisenhower and the defense program that helped get the freeway system started and that it has been a good partnership with the defense department for a long time.

4. Transportation Director's Report

Chairman Fitzhugh invited Mr. Eric Anderson, MAG Transportation Director, to provide the

Transportation Director's Report.

Mr. Anderson indicated that February sales tax revenues were up 4.4% based on January activity. January revenue grew 14% due to the Christmas holiday season, but some of the increase could be attributed to the shift in the holiday shopping season which normally occurs in November but occurred in December. February revenues were up 4.4% and year-to-date sales tax growth is at 7.7%, which is slightly above forecast.

Mr. Anderson indicated that HURF revenues for January were also strong as they grew 6.9% above last year, and 3.6% year-to-date. The growth was largely driven by VLT revenues, which is an indication that new car sales are rebounding. VLT revenues had a strong 2012 and 2013. Fuel tax revenues are still flat and will probably continue to be flat or decline over the next few years.

The budget that passed out of the senate included a \$30 million distribution to cities and counties in Arizona. Mr. Anderson indicated that he's working through the numbers right now and just received data from ADOT for the distributions. The new distribution is a start to stopping the HURF sweeps but there is still a long ways to go as the amount is higher than the statutory limit on HURF funding for DPS. MAG will continue to monitor the situation.

Mr. Anderson noted that Kelly Taft, Bob Hazeltt, and he participated in the I-11 sign planting ceremony at the Hoover Dam bridge. Governor Sandoval from Nevada and Governor Brewer were both in attendance. The ceremony is a good indication that I-11 is alive and well; the MAG in Las Vegas has committed \$300 million for the project from the Hoover Dam bridge to Las Vegas and the State of Nevada has committed another \$200 million.

Mr. Anderson stated that there are two conferences coming up. The Arizona Transit Association conference will be held on April 13 and April 14 in Tucson at the University Marriot. The Roads and Streets conference is right after from April 16-18 at Star Pass.

5. USDOT TIGER Grant Round 6 – FY2014

Chairman Fitzhugh invited Ms. Eileen Yazzie from MAG to present on the USDOT TIGER Grant Round 6 – FY2014.

Ms. Yazzie indicated that Mindy Kimball has been working with MAG, particularly with the transit committee, for the last two years. Ms. Yazzie indicated that Ms. Kimball was a big supporter and became her own investigator and analyst on the ST-LUIS study to take it in a different route. Ms. Yazzie also indicated that at the last Transit Committee the work that Ms. Kimball had done and the work that classes at Arizona State University continue to do was acknowledged, particularly relating to multi-modal transportation. MAG will continue to work with ASU and try to integrate some of the work and research they are doing with the work that is being done at MAG.

Ms. Yazzie indicated that a memorandum was sent with the agenda packet that presented what the current Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) outlined in terms of the amount, due dates, and requirements. This is the sixth round of Tiger. Funding has varied from \$400 to \$600 million

total, with specific set-asides for rural areas. In some years, TIGER has funded planning activities and some years it has not; last year there was not any funding set aside for planning activities. The six requirements of TIGER have stayed the same; State of Good Repair, Safety, Economic Competitiveness, Livability, Environmental Sustainability, and Project Readiness, with additional factors on innovations and partnerships. There have been different focuses throughout the years and the amount of grants has varied. The first round, grants varied between \$30 and \$60 million for some projects and some regions; now the minimum requirement is \$10 million dollars and we typically see grants hanging out in that \$10 million to \$20 million area.

The first year of TIGER was a bit of a grab-bag with thousands and thousands of applications. Over the years, the DOT evaluation committee has talked with member agencies, transit agencies, MPOs and COGS. The committee indicated that they want regional applications, and prefer only one project coming out of a region with local support, regional support, and if possible, state support. Valley Metro and Phoenix have been in constant contact with DOT representatives over the past several weeks, who have continued to push for a regional application.

Last year there was not a project out of the FHWA side that fit the TIGER criteria. On the transit side, there were a couple projects that met the criteria. At the end of the day, the Regional Council supported one regional application with two projects; Tempe Streetcar and the Phoenix operations and maintenance facility.

Ms. Yazzie noted that this item is on the agenda for possible action and that this meeting is the initial discussion for this item. The deadline for grant submittal is April 28 and there is a Regional Council meeting on April 23.

The handout provided a summary of all the project application that were submitted to MAG, which were three capital projects and two planning projects. Capital projects were from the City of Buckeye, City of Chandler, and City of Phoenix. The Buckeye project is more of the traditional roadway/highway project and does have the local match. The project includes improvements on the interchange, ramp extensions, signalization, and roadway. The Chandler application is again more of the traditional roadway improvement from 2/3 lanes to 6 lanes. The project would also include sidewalks, bikelanes, sidewalks, and landscaping. The City of Phoenix project is on Central Ave from Jefferson down to Baseline. The project is actually a compilation of projects that effect the area; improvements to transit center; refurbishment of the operations and maintenance facility; and street, roadway and bike/pedestrian improvements. An additional item to take into consideration is that Congressman Ed Pastor is retiring this year and his district is in mainly in Phoenix as well as other areas. His office has been in contact with the City of Phoenix and has encouraged a project to come out of the region that his office can support. a factor when considering which project(s) should move forward.

Additional detail about the three projects that were submitted were placed at the members' seats. This included a more detailed description about the projects, costs, and proposed schedules. In addition to the three capital projects there are an additional two planning projects. There's \$35 million nationwide for planning projects, which also have to meet the grant criteria. One project is a Gila Bend study and another is in central Phoenix which includes additional environmental studies on the same corridor as the proposed capital project.

Ms. Yazzie indicated that Valley Metro is also working on vetting transit projects and . will be holding a meeting next Wednesday.Mr. John Farry clarified that the meeting is next Tuesday at 11:30 am.

Chairman Fitzhugh asked the committee if there are any questions. Ms. Leah Hubbard asked if it was possible to have the handouts emailed, and Ms. Yazzie indicated that it was.

Mr. Dan Cook asked if there's an indication of the location match on the Phoenix project. Mr. Rick Naimark from the City of Phoenix indicated that it will be a 30 to 50 percent match or 7 to 10 million dollars.

Mr. Jeff Martin spoke in favor of the Phoenix projects. He indicated that at the end of the day, when projects are considered, they will hit the Secretary of Transportation's desk. At that time, you need a champion from congress to support projects.. This year seems like a unique opportunity with Congressman Pastor retiring.. Mr. Martin indicated that the committee should give serious consideration to focus on the two Phoenix projects.

Ms. Debbie Albert asked if we're looking for two projects to move forward, one out of the capital side and one out of the planning side. Ms. Yazzie said that every year has been different in the past. In light of there being a set aside, Ms. Yazzie indicated that if the committee is going to make a recommendation for the capital side it would make sense to make a recommendation for the planning side as well.

Mr. Cook asked if the Phoenix planning study was a better fit for the transit mode and asked how it fits with what was submitted to Valley Metro. Mr. Naimark stated that they're seeking more guidance from Washington whether or not to bundle them as one project or apply as two projects. The two projects are in the same corridor and there is a need to look at them holistically; they are both multi modal. Discussion continued.

Mr. Naimark noted that the USDOT has clearly been focused on low income areas. It just so happens that the proposed Phoenix project is in a target area that would be viewed very highly in the evaluation process given the demographics of the community.

Mr. Scott Lowe indicated that the committee seemed to be focusing a lot on the other projects and because Buckeye did submit a project, he wanted to mention they are the last incorporated city in Maricopa County to the west so there is not a lot of opportunity within the City of Buckeye to do much. Mr. Lowe stated that there has been a lot done in the Miller Road area off I-10. There are some other opportunities to improve the performance of the interchange and the area north of the canal, which was the reasoning for the project. Trucks queue up on the freeway just to get off on Miller Road – it is creating issues with the freeway and the Miller road interchange. Moreover, there is no transit in the area so there's very little opportunity until transit is extended out.

Chairman Fitzhugh asked if staff's recommendation is to pick one project from the planning side and one project from the capital side. Ms. Yazzie indicated that staff does not have a recommendation. Ms. Yazzie stated that is up to the committee to determine if support should be for one project, two projects, and three projects.

Chairman Fitzhugh indicated he was still working through whether or not one motion should be made for the planning project and one motion should be made for the capital project. Ms. Yazzie indicated that it could be done in one or two motions.

Mr. Dick McKinley asked if it is staff's opinion that Phoenix projects are likely to score better than other projects. Mr. Anderson said that MAG has not gone through any formal analysis to put the projects through an evaluation criteria, but on the surface if you look at the criteria in the NOFA, the multi-modal aspect and the Title VI environmental justice populations, the Phoenix project probably matches up better than some of the other projects. Mr. Anderson cautioned that it is just a qualitative assessment and emphasized that it is the committee's decision to make. Discussion continued.

Mr. John Hauskins from Maricopa County stated that it is important to note that this kind of program is quite difficult to get funding from, and that the maximum political support is needed. It is unrealistic to think that the region be able to go forward with a project that does not have federal level support. The region has been through TIGER process before and has seen which projects have been approved and which projects have not, and this should be taken into account as the committee moves forward.

Mr. Cook moved to recommend that the Phoenix capital project on Central from Jefferson to Baseline and the Phoenix planning project in the same area move forward either as a joint project or as separate projects based on the recommendation of Phoenix after they get more information. Mr. Andy Granger seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Naimark thanked the members of the committee for their support and stated that Phoenix would do everything in their power to get this delivered for the region.

6. Update on the Downtown Phoenix Core Connections and Operations Study - A Central Phoenix Transportation Framework Study Initiative

Chairman Fitzhugh invited Mr. Mark Melnychenko from the City of Phoenix to present on the update on the Downtown Phoenix Core Connections and Operations Study - A Central Phoenix Transportation Framework Study Initiative.

Mr. Melnychenko thanked the committee for the opportunity to present. MAG and the City of Phoenix worked together to carve out the area for a special study in the downtown area. The project represents a partnership with shared funding and started last summer with the Downtown Comprehensive Transportation Study.

Mr. Melnychenko indicated that over the past year there has been a lot of feedback from the community and the business owners. With a study like this, it is important to look at how transportation and economic development tie together. This study is not just moving cars; years ago, there was also talk there was talk about the evacuation of downtown Phoenix after the workday. Now there has been an about-face and people are encouraged to stay downtown.

The study purpose was to improve the movement of people downtown and to provide recommended changes on traffic plans and how those mesh with future transit plans downtown. The study looked at existing conditions using the transmodeler. Wilson & Company, the Central

Phoenix Framework Study consultant team, is also as part of this project. Phoenix has worked closely together with MAG and consultant team on moving a set of recommendations forward.

The City of Phoenix has a number of initiatives underway that to connect as part of this study, including the Central Phoenix Framework Study, bike share plan, bike master plan, and reinvent Phoenix. There are also a number of re-development projects, such as the future Arizona State University law school, expansion of ASU to south of the railroad tracks, and new hotels in downtown. Further, there was a downtown plan prepared a number of years ago called the connected oasis. The Downtown Phoenix Core Connections and Operations Study also ties in closely with that, including the pedestrian corridors, transit improvements, and the Adams Street Reactivation study. There has been an attempt to incorporate all these moving parts into the project into a cohesive plan.

Mr. Melyanchano presented a graphic with regional bus flow on Washington and Jefferson up central avenue. He indicated that there will be two light rail lines in the future that will tie in with the project; one from the south, one from the west. With these light rail lines, there will be a train every 2-3 minutes so the study looks at alternatives to address the situation. There is also regional bus connectivity up to the direct HOV ramps at 3rd Ave and 3rd Street. There alternatives on how to address moving that traffic in the future once other freeway improvements are made.

Mr. Melnychenko stated that the public outreach process on the study is intended to leave no stone left unturned. Public outreach started with focus groups to garner feedback on the strategies that the public and stakeholders would like to see. Open houses were held in November and February to discuss the study with members of the public. Public outreach has extended from small community meetings to large regional bodies. Public outreach is concluding this week with presentations to the downtown Phoenix Partnership, Downtown Phoenix Inc., and the Downtown Phoenix Alliance.

Mr. Melnychenko indicated that the study area encompasses 7th street to 7th Avenue and McDowell to Buckeye. There have also been meetings with adjacent residential communities and villages for feedback because the recommendations that move forward will impact those areas.

In building the recommended plan, the study team started with strategies from focus groups. From that, the team presented the scenarios based off those strategies. Next, the consultant looked at specific areas of focus. From all that information, the study has come together with a phased improvement plan between 0-5 years, 6-10 years, and 11+ years into the future.

There were a number of strategies brought up from the focus group; not all of them deal with transportation. For instance, there were comments relating to gateway features identifying the downtown area. A number of the strategies from the focus groups and public meetings have been implemented into the plan.

The study looked at a number of elements downtown, including changing one-way streets to two-way streets and the potential light-rail turnaround near the convention center. Wilson & Company did a detailed analysis of a potential light-rail turnaround near the convention center and felt that was not the appropriate place for the turnaround.

Phase One recommendations (0-5 years) focused on converting 3rd and 5th street from one-way

streets to two-way streets with bike lanes. Further, Phase One recommendations include Roosevelt Street improvements which are starting construction this summer. As part of Phase One, the study would also look to complete bike lane connectivity with the missing segment on Washington/Jefferson. These improvements would align with future Buckeye Road improvements and the bike share program. Mr. Melnychenko indicated that the focus will be the 3rd Street corridor, to connect future ASU activity to the south and could be part of the re-invent midtown component that's underway right now.

Phase Two (year 6-10) improvements are impacted by other regional studies like the Spine Study. Phase two also includes extension of HOV lanes from Thomas Road to Washington/Jefferson with direct HOV access. This would allow regional bus traffic to be moved from 3rd and 5th avenue to downtown.

Phase Two improvements also include changes to 7th Street and 7th Avenue. The input that the study team has received was to begin to "tame" the 7th streets. The study provides a stronger pedestrian area along the 7s, particularly 7th street, to make it more of a downtown corridor. 7th Avenue would also be part of that thought process, and Phoenix has begun to do some of the improvements in October along Grand Avenue.

Phase Two would also look at converting Central Avenue into more of a transit focused corridor. This has been talked about in the past, but there will now be opportunity to begin to look at Central Avenue from a different perspective due to the additional transit activity downtown. The Adams Street reactivation project will connect the convention center with Central Avenue. The goal is to create a stronger pedestrian area and focus more on transit. Bike lanes would also be extended on 3rd avenue south of Jefferson into the Grant/Lincoln area. The phase would also look at specific gateways into downtown.

The third phase takes place in 11+ years. Central Avenue would be transformed into the pedestrian transit mall. In addition to rail, there would be dedicated lanes for bikes and a bus way that would have shared access to a series of uses. Phase Two would include two hotels and a parking structure with limited access; feedback from the community was to provide some vehicular access on the street. The study would also look to move some of the traffic to 1st street. The hope is to move some of the traffic from Central Ave, Van Buren, and Jefferson to adjacent streets. Mr. Melnychenko indicated that it is best to divert traffic from the ASU areas as it would be counter productive to what has been accomplished. Mr. Melnychenko stated that a number of the public have asked why 3rd and 5th Avenues improvements are out so far. Mr. Melnychenko explained that the HOV lanes and bus traffic would need to be in place before these changes could occur. Phase Two would look at public transit on the future of a downtown circulator. Mr. Melnychenko stated that everyone is aware of the past history of DASH, but with a growing downtown density a downtown loop that would make a lot of sense.

Moving forward, Wilson and Company will look at modeling the improvements and the effects of the improvements on the Sunburst plan. The study team is hoping to put together a list of recommendations to make the plan stronger. The study will also look at the ingress and egress throughout the events period for vehicles, transit, and pedestrians. The public were very high on moving and extending what was shown on 7th Ave and 7th Street further, keeping vehicular traffic on Central Avenue, and protected bike lanes in the future.

The study team is going through final feedback from stakeholders. Thus far there has been positive support for the project. The team will soon begin modeling and defining other management improvements, other ITS improvements, and conduct final stakeholder coordination.

Mr. Naimark indicated that big picture take-aways from the study were that the transportation network in downtown was transforming from car-oriented to other things. This will mean more congestion but people use other mechanisms. Secondly the robustness of future transit system will have to make some areas of town fairly inaccessible by car. Third, the objective is to get people in and out of major events but that priority will not overwhelm other priorities for the community. Ultimately, this will make for a more exciting livable center for the city and the region.

Mr. Woody Scoutten indicated that on Aug 17, 2015. APWA national conference will be here and wanted to know if any streets will be torn up around the convention center. Mr. Melnychenko expressed hope that there would be some improvements underway but no funding has been secured.

Mr. Fitzhugh thanked Mr. Melnychenko for his presentation.

7. MAG Hassayampa Valley Rail Corridors Cost Analysis

Chair Fitzhugh welcomed Marc Pearsall of MAG to present an update to the Transportation Review Committee on the completed Hassayampa Valley Rail Corridors Cost Analysis.

Mr. Pearsall explained that this was the first of two inter-related presentations. The second would be given by Mr. Carlos Lopez of ADOT on the Wellton Branch Railroad Rehabilitation Study.

Mr. Pearsall said that the spirit of the Hassayampa Valley Rail Corridors Cost Analysis was that the area was originally identified within the MAG I-8/I-17 Hidden Valley Transportation Framework Study as a potential illustrative corridor in the future. He said that the purpose was to review the technical feasibility of a new, conceptual railroad line connecting the communities of Buckeye/Arlington with Gila Bend; and Buckeye/Arlington with Morristown near Wickenburg.

He added that the purpose of these freight and passenger rail lines would be to serve a proposed future area of 500,000 residents by connecting the existing Union Pacific Railroad lines in Buckeye/Arlington and Gila Bend and the BNSF Railway line in the Northwest Valley; acting as a reliever line into the Valley as well as contributing to the development of an enhanced CANAMEX transportation alternative for the Hassayampa Valley and the SR-85 corridors. He noted that the footprint of this potential railroad corridor would be within/parallel to the north-south Buckeye-Gila Bend SR-85/I-17 corridor.

Mr. Pearsall continued his presentation by explained the contents of the final report, noting that the Kimley Horn staff engaged in a literature review of all previous corridor related studies, such as the Arizona State Rail Plan, the Hidden Waters Corridor Feasibility Study and the MAG Yuma West Commuter Rail Study. The consultant team also conducted field visit of the corridor and a compendium of corridor and crossing cost elements, such as grade separated crossings,

bridges, culverts/canals, switches, and utilities. The study also reviewed corridor cross-section, corridor development options as well as cost element quantities for each corridor option (based on rail industry and peer reviewed unit pricing) as well as planning-level cost for each corridor option.

Mr. Pearlsall then displayed a map of the Wellton Branch, along with original survey maps of the original railroad alignments from the 1920s, and also showed the corridors between the Phoenix and Yuma areas, revealing the service levels before and after Amtrak's departure from Phoenix in June 1996. He stated that this left Phoenix, the most populous metro area/city in the U.S., lacking intercity passenger rail service.

Mr. Pearsall summarized the field review of State Route 85, along with the variations in potential rail corridors from the UPRR Sunset Route/Gila Mainline in Gila Bend through to Buckeye and then northward through the Hassayampa Valley, Douglas Ranch area to Morristown near Wickenburg, a total of nearly 80 miles of potential railroad. He reviewed the conceptual corridors, Segment 1: Morristown to Buckeye; Segment 2: Buckeye/ Arlington to Gila Bend along with 2A: Old Highway 80 and 2B: SR 85. The corridor cost elements concluded that Segment No. 1 would total over \$1.3 billion for a 50 mile railroad, while Segments No. 2A (Old Highway 80) and No. 2B (SR 85) would total around \$800 million respectively.

Noting that the two items were linked, he stated that both he and Mr. Lopez could answer questions collectively after the next presentation. Chair Fitzhugh thanked Mr. Pearsall and moved onto the next item on the agenda.

8. ADOT Wellton Branch Railroad Study

Chair Fitzhugh welcomed Carlos Lopez of ADOT to present an update to the Transportation Review Committee on the completed ADOT Wellton Branch Railroad Study.

Mr. Lopez of ADOT explained that his study focused on a segment of Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) Phoenix Subdivision between Buckeye and Wellton (east of Yuma). He noted that the purpose of the study was to analyze the cost to reinstate both freight and passenger rail service, including the rehabilitation of over seventy miles of out-of-service track from Arlington (near Palo Verde) to Roll (near Wellton). He explained that the line had not seen freight or Amtrak service since the 1996-1997 and served as the primary freight and passenger route from Phoenix to Los Angeles from 1926 to 1996, when it was downgraded to storage.

Mr. Lopez advised that the rehabilitation of the Wellton Branch would provide a direct benefit to Union Pacific, Amtrak, and the State of Arizona by: providing rail connectivity between Phoenix and California, providing Amtrak access directly to Downtown Phoenix with through trains from Los Angeles and Houston/New Orleans; and provide improvements towards the ADOT State Rail Plan vision for passenger rail. He noted that the increase of potential for additional freight customers along Wellton Branch would contribute to the economic development objectives traditionally associated with freight rail. He then explained the conclusions and assumptions of the study.

The study team of URS Corp and ADOT through field inspections, surveys and document review, inspected trackways, ballast, rail, and the need for railroad cross-ties for Federal Railroad

Administration (FRA) Class 3 and 4 operations. One necessity would be to lengthen the JBS Five Rivers Cattle Feeding track at the McElhaney Yard siding in Wellton, thus permitting longer freight trains to stay off of the mainline between Yuma and Phoenix. He noted that additional requirements for the improved railroad would be a new railroad signal system, including the new federally mandated GPS based signal system known as Positive Train Control. This new system would permit for Class 3 and 4 operation which allows faster speeds. New At-Grade Crossings, upgraded crossings, bridges, safety walkways and handrails, vegetation removal, and cosmetic repair was recommended in the detailed inspection.

Mr. Lopez explained the development of four alternative scenarios for improvements, each with its own cost analysis and range. He noted that the development of each scenario included the following considerations: coordination with Amtrak to discuss current train schedules and potential future train schedules; coordination with Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) to identify current and future train operations; and analysis of the potential requirements and cost for Positive Train Control (PTC) for corridor. He also added that for each alternative scenario, the train operations requirements and UPRR policies and practices was identified. He then detailed each scenario with the following components: Scenario 1 – Through freight service only (FRA Class 2 Track) w/ max speed = 25 mph; Scenario 2 – Through freight service and basic Amtrak service (FRA Class 3 Track) w/ max freight speed = 40 mph and max passenger speed = 60 mph; Scenario 2A – Same as Scenario 2, but with more expensive PTC and Scenario 3 – Through freight service and higher speed passenger service (FRA Class 4 Track), and max freight speed = 60 mph and max passenger = 79 mph.

Mr. Lopez then explained the alternatives that were crafted from the scenarios: Alt #1 FRA Class 2 Track with a requirement for active portion of Roll Industrial Lead (11.6 mi); Alt #1: FRA Class 2 Track with requirements for inactive portions of Roll Industrial Lead (19.7 mi) and Wellton Branch (56.9 miles); Alt #2 and 2A: FRA Class 3 Track and Alt 3: FRA Class 4 Track. He also discussed capital cost estimates for each alternative, from the \$165 to \$420 million range.

He concluded by noting the planning level cost estimates developed for freight and passenger rail scenarios. He also observed that the current freight demand along the active Wellton Branch line / Phoenix Line does not warrant re-opening the line at present time, but that as freight demand increased, the Wellton Branch line could be rehabilitated in phases. He also said that as for the state's passenger rail vision, two trains per day required rehabilitation of the out of service corridor, but that passenger traffic was not cost effective to justify the infrastructure investment of the corridor. He added that next steps to consider included identifying and developing freight opportunities, conducting a more detailed inventory, coordinating with UPRR and Amtrak to identify potential train and traffic volume flow and conducting train simulations if necessary. Mr. Lopez concluded his presentation.

Chair Fitzhugh thanked Mr. Lopez and Mr. Pearsall for their presentations and asked if there were further questions or comments regarding the agenda item.

9. Request for Future Agenda Items

Chairman Fitzhugh requested topics or issues of interest that the Transportation Review Committee would like to have considered for discussion at a future meeting. There were none.

10. Member Agency Update

Chairman Fitzhugh offered opportunities for member agencies to present updates to their community.

11. Next Meeting Date

The next regular Transportation Review Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 24, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. in the MAG Office, Saguaro Room.

There being no further business, Chairman Fitzhugh adjourned the meeting at 11:32 a.m.